



# First Resighting Since the 1940s of Siebold’s Watersnake, *Ferania sieboldii* (Schlegel 1837), in Delhi, India

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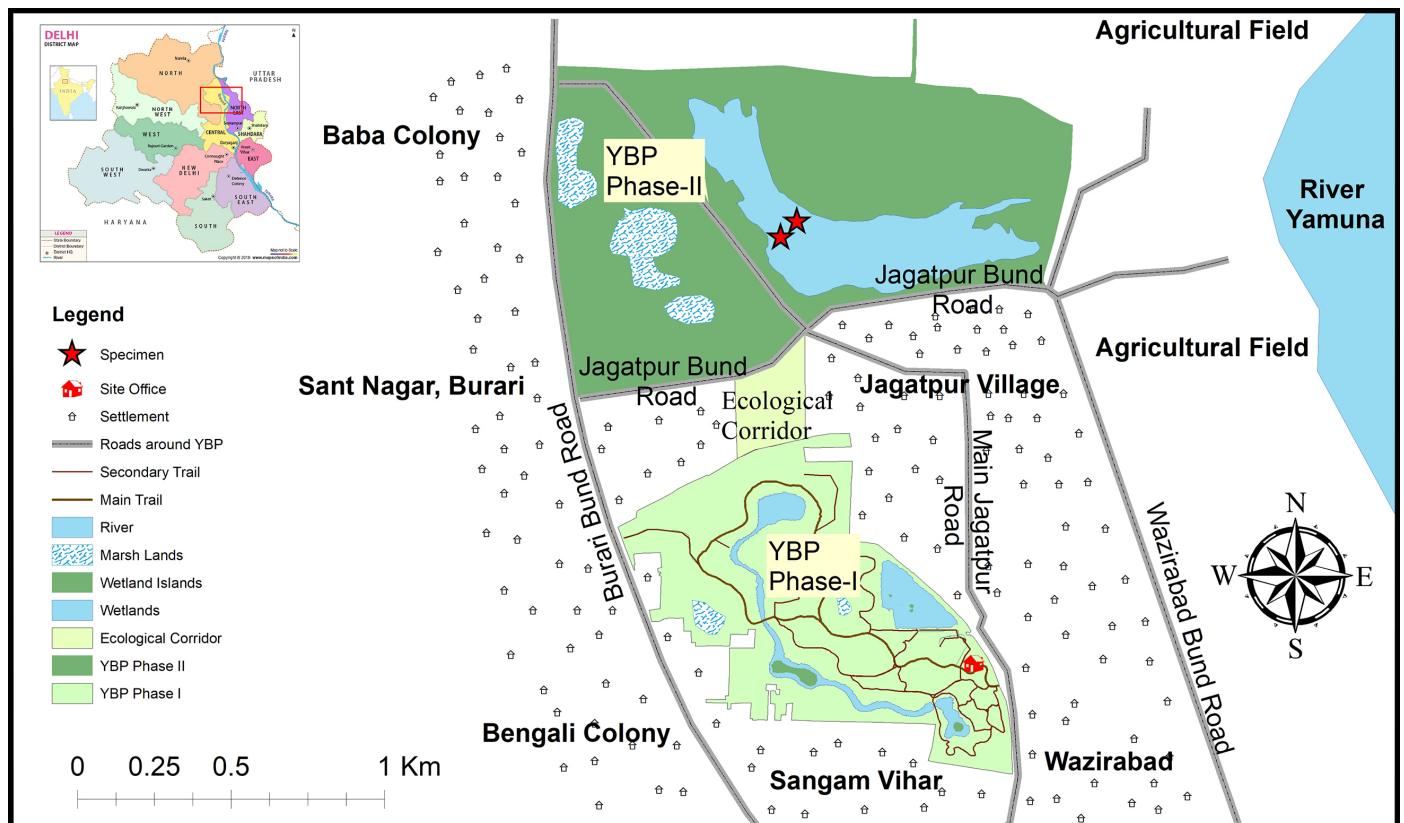
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In India, Siebold’s Watersnake (*Ferania sieboldii*), which until recently (Karns et al. 2010) was assigned to the genus *Enhydria*, has a disjunct distribution based on relatively few reports. Recent records document the distribu-

tion of the species in riparian habitats of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Assam, and Kerala, with older records from Maharashtra and Kerala needing confir-



**Fig. 1.** Siebold’s Watersnakes (*Ferania sieboldii*) from Delhi, India. Individuals photographed in July 2016 (top) and in December 2015 (bottom). Photographs by D.P. Srivastava.



**Fig. 2.** Map of the Yamuna Biodiversity Park (YBP) in Delhi, India, showing the locations (red stars) where Siebold's Watersnakes (*Ferania sieboldii*) were encountered in a Phase-II wetland.

mation (Sharma 2003; Whitaker and Captain 2004; Karns et al. 2010). Smith (1943) had recorded the species from Delhi but no more recent records existed until 2015.

In 2015, during routine visual surveys and opportunistic encounters, we recorded three individuals (one adult, total length 68 cm, and two juveniles, 18 cm each) on 10 July (28°44'41.61"N, 77°12'47.26"E) and another individual (28 cm) on 17 December (28°44'43.28"N, 77°12'48.97"E) (Fig. 1). All were associated with Indian Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) in a restored wetland in Phase-II of the Yamuna Biodiversity Park (YBP) in Delhi, India (Fig. 2). The presence of juveniles indicates that these snakes are reproducing. Snakes were captured, photographed, and released at the original sites of collection.

The Yamuna Biodiversity Park is a restored mosaic of riparian habitats developed as a collaboration of the Delhi Development Authority and the Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems (CEMDE) at the University of Delhi in 457 acres of a highly degraded landscape that includes inactive (Phase-I) and active (Phase-II) floodplains of the River Yamuna (Niangthianhoi and Khudsar 2009, 2015). The restored grasslands and forests now provide habitat for many animals, including Leopards (*Panthera pardus*), a top predator.

Das et al. (1998) assessed *F. sieboldii* from central and peninsular India as being of Lower Risk-Near Threatened. Threats to the species included loss of habitat, pollution, and human interference. In fact, when reporting the initial July discovery of the species in the YBP, Nandi (2015) quoted F.A. Khudsar as saying: "They might not have had the habitat to breed."

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